

INTRODUCTION

The author of Hebrews encourages us to “*Consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*” In his book Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer states that “*The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.*” But as Aaron said on Sunday, we often fall into the trap of assuming the worst about each other, of being judgmental, of having a critical spirit, and even doubting others’ intentions—especially in the Church. And the worst part is, we usually feel justified in doing so. So how do we become a church of people who have such love for each other that we can’t help but make Christ known to the community around us?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been truly alone? Was it an enjoyable experience?

2. Read Hebrews 10:19-25. What three things are we told to do?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

3. Why are we told to do these things?

4. Read Exodus 26:30-33. The Temple was divided into the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. The outer court was open. The Holy Place was only open to priests. The Holy of Holies could only be entered by the High Priest, who brought a blood sacrifice and incense into it once a year to atone for the sins of the people. The Ark of the Covenant, God’s presence in the Old Testament, was in the Holy of Holies. Between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was a veil, or curtain, a representation of the barrier between God and His people because of sin. When the author of Hebrews states in verses 19-21, “*We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body*”, what do you think that meant to the Jewish people who read it?

5. Read Matthew 27:50-51. At the very moment of Jesus’ death, the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was torn in two from the top to the bottom, signifying that Jesus’ sacrifice, His blood, was a sufficient atonement for sin. The way into God’s presence was now open for all, not just for the High Priest. Do you find it amazing that you can come into the very presence of God? If not, how can you regain that sense of awe that you are given such a great privilege?

6. Because we now have direct access to the Most High God, believers are challenged to “*draw near to God with a sincere heart.*” How do we do this? What is meant by a sincere heart?

Study Questions for Community Groups

7. How can you “*hold unswervingly to the hope*” you profess? What is that hope? What is the reason given for why you should do this?
8. What do you think it means to “*Spur one another on toward love and good deeds*”?
9. What do you like to do to encourage others? What forms of encouragement do you appreciate? What are specific ways you could spur others in your group to love and good deeds?
10. Does “*meeting together*” mean church?
11. How does being involved with other believers fuel your spiritual growth and worship?
12. What is “*the Day*” (Hebrews 10:25)?
13. Which of the three exhortations (draw near to God, hold unswervingly to the hope you profess, spur one another on to love and good deeds) do you need to apply? Discuss ways that you can grow in this area.

SCRIPTURE

¹⁹Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:19-25 (NIV)

APPLICATION

Select any of the following:

- Choose a spiritual discipline (Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study, Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service, Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration) you do not normally practice and spend time this week in a fresh way with God. You can find descriptions of the disciplines at renovare.org/about/ideas/spiritual-disciplines.
- Since unswerving hope is possible only because of the faithfulness of God, spend time in the Word this week studying His faithfulness. To get you started: Numbers 23:19, Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 36:5, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 119:90, Lamentations 3:22-23, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:13....
- Ask God to open your eyes to other Christ-followers who need encouragement. Do something to encourage them (pray for and/or with them, send them a note, go to dinner together, etc.).
- Examine your heart and ask the Spirit to reveal any critical spirit or bitterness within you toward another believer or the church. Confess this to God; if there is a break in relationship, make every effort to reconcile (Romans 12:18).